

News Release

Minnesota's Energy Future: Community Energy and Economic Opportunity Forum

By Krista Lemos on Monday, October 31, 2005

The Northwest Clean Energy Resource Team (CERT) and University of Minnesota Crookston will co-host the **Community Energy and Economic Opportunity Forum**. The Northwest team, one of six citizen-based teams from around the state, recently released its regional Strategic Energy Plan and hopes to use this forum to discuss the economic benefits that derive from local energy efficiency and renewable energy projects stimulate involvement in community-based energy initiatives. UMN-Crookston Chancellor Dr. Charles Casey will give the welcome, with other local speakers including John Schmidt, Pembina Trail RC&D, Jim Steenerson of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Tom Melin from the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, Arlo Rude, Thief River Falls Municipal Utilities and Mike Moore, Thief River Falls Economic Development.

Joining these local organizations for this Energy Forum will be the Minnesota Department of Commerce State Energy Office; Environmental Assistance, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Community Based Energy Development (C-BED) Organization; CERT statewide organizers, and the University of Minnesota Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment (IREE).

These groups have joined forces to travel the state to share information on new renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives and to assist rural communities with their energy projects. Linda Kingery, Executive Director of the Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership says, "Because we all have a stake in our energy future, the NW Clean Energy Resource Team invites community leaders, interested citizens and economic developers to participate in this forum. This collaboration of citizen leaders, state and federal agencies, and University of Minnesota addresses energy conservation and renewable energy opportunities in the context of northwestern MN."

The Energy Forum will empower attendees to become more energy efficient and start using renewable energy right away. Mike Taylor from the Minnesota Department of Commerce will provide tips on low cost no cost energy efficiency improvements and discuss how the Department of Commerce is working to get more renewable energy projects installed around the state. George Crocker will explain the new C-BED tariff and how it will help spur community wind development. Todd Reubold, Assistant Director of University of Minnesota's Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment, will describe the new cutting edge renewable energy research underway at the University.

The coalition will ultimately be making eight stops in Minnesota communities scattered throughout the state and will be visiting the Northwest Region in both Crookston and Bemidji. Details about the Crookston event are as follows:

Event Details

Date: Monday, November 14th, 2005
Time: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Location: UMN-Crookston Campus, Sahlstrom Conference Center, Rooms A&B
2900 University Avenue (parking is free)

The Clean Energy Resource Teams project began in 2003 with funding from the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. In July 2005 the teams received another 2 years of funding to turn their strategic energy plans, that lay out project priorities to capitalize on each region's local resources, into on-the-ground projects. Through these projects CERT members hope to stimulate the rural Minnesota economy using local resources and innovative 21st Century technologies to generate energy and thereby keep money at home and create new local jobs.

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